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PROGRAM Good Morning America

STATION WJLA-TV
ABC Network

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SUBJECT The Middle East

JACK ANDERSON: Newsmen tell us how hot things are getting in the Middle East. Weathermen tell us how hot it is in Washington. Well, the weather in Washington has a direct connection to the political climate in the Middle East. Let me explain that.

Our multibillion-dollar intelligence network depends on a vast array of computers at various locations in Washington. Information is fed into the computers from our satellite spies in the sky, from human spies on the ground, from researchers and analysts. Now, all this raw material goes into incredibly complex computers at the Central Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon, and the National Security Agency. The flow of information is too massive for mere mortals to digest. So the intelligence operation depends on computers.

Ah, but here's the problem. The super-sophisticated computers generate a lot of heat. They won't function properly if the temperature gets too high. So they need air conditioning during the heat and humidity of a Washington summer. Well, the air conditioners, in turn, depend on the local electric power supply. Well, there are times during the hot Washington summer when the power simply conks out. The local generators can't produce enough juice to keep everyone's air conditioners going during the prolonged heat wave.

Now, I've seen a highly sensitive report that tells what happens under these conditions. The report deals specifically with the Naval Telecommunications Center in Washington. I'm quoting. "This area is a critical part of the global telecommunications network for the Department of Defense. Numerous emergencies have occurred that have shut down the

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operations of the entire center. These unscheduled shutdowns were directly related to failures in the air conditioning system."

In other words, the hot news that the President needs from the Middle East may not always reach him in time, because of the hot weather in Washington.